

# Novel School

7-11 July 2025

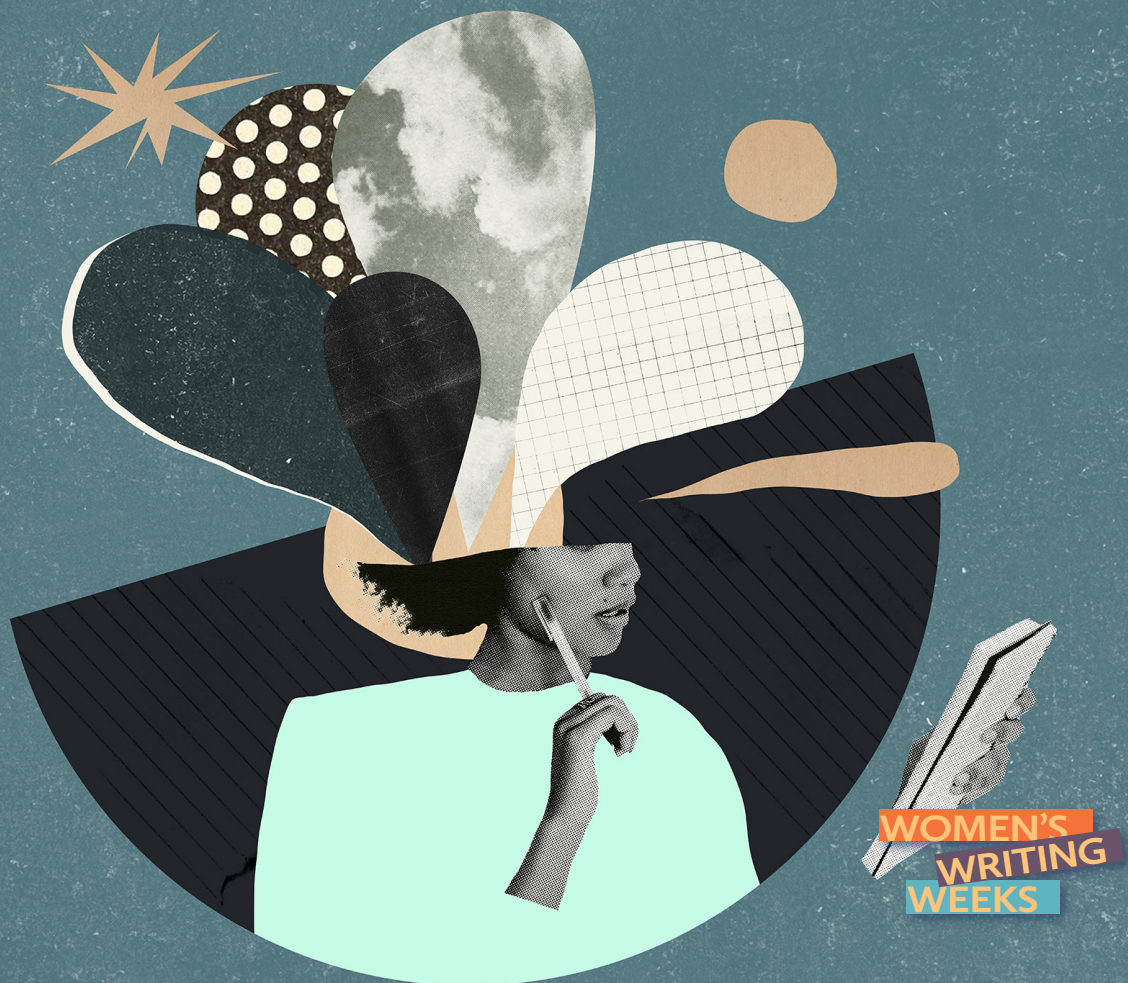
*'The tutors were all highly experienced and somehow managed to be rigorous, encouraging and kind all at the same time'*

*mslexia*

A WEEK FOR CREATING AND SHAPING YOUR NOVEL

Lesley Glaister   Claire Hynes   Jane Rogers   Margaret Wilkinson

SPECIAL GUEST: Literary agent Amandeep Singh



*Mslexia Novel School is an online course for writers embarking on a new novel, or rethinking an existing draft.*

*This will be a whole week to make real progress with your book – with expert tuition from renowned tutors, a professional writing coach to keep you on track, an on-call counsellor to provide emotional support, and a lively group of fellow writers to cheer you on. All this and more, in the comfort of your own home.*

*Course fee: £485*

## Course structure

### Craft tuition

Four leading writer-tutors will each focus on a single aspect of the novel-writing craft, creating a varied week of high-quality workshops.

Our four core craft tutors are:

- ▶ Lesley Glaister on creating compelling characters that will leap off the page
  - ▶ Claire Hynes on dialogue and voice to bring your fictional scenes to life
  - ▶ Jane Rogers on structuring and plotting to keep the reader hooked
  - ▶ Margaret Wilkinson on identifying and developing your unique authorial style
- More details about our craft tutors and their workshops are overleaf.

- ▶ Our special Friday guest, literary agent *Amandeep Singh*, will answer questions about submitting a novel for publication

### Small-group teaching

We know individual attention is all-important, so our workshop groups will be limited to around 12 people – which means your tutors will have time to get to know you and your writing. There will be only four groups on the course, so book early to secure your place!

### Praise for our previous course

*'I've done a creative writing MA, and this certainly topped that in the quality of the teaching.'*

*'I signed up to break the block on my novel and I've absolutely achieved that goal – and I've come away with an online writing group too.'*

*'It was like falling back in love with writing.'*

*'I loved the deep focus on separate themes each day, and the camaraderie of the group.'*

*'This week has restored a lot of my lost confidence over years of writing.'*

*'Having a counsellor with her experience on hand was just wonderful.'*

### A writing community

The core teaching takes place in small groups from 10am-4pm, but all four groups will come together for the coaching workshops and social aspects of each day – to form a community of fiction-obsessed writers who will become your friends for life. And there will be a special 'keeping in touch' session on the final day for cementing those contacts.

### Motivation and support

Because this is Mslexia, we know how important it is to nurture the whole writer. That's why, in addition to our core Novel School teaching, we're also including motivation and goal-setting workshops led by experienced writing coach Bec Evans, drop-in surgeries with counsellor Sue Spencer for anyone who's feeling a bit lost, all held together by our MC Rosie Garland – novelist, poet and performer *extraordinaire* – who will introduce you to fellow writers on the course.

More details about our motivation and support tutors and their workshops are overleaf.



Our four craft tutors have each designed a bespoke day of workshops, based on their many years' experience of teaching creative writing at the highest level. From Monday to Thursday each group will spend a day with one tutor, divided into manageable tuition sessions, with breaks for refreshment and private writing.

At the end of each day, from 17:00-18:00, is Happy Hour – when all workshop groups will come together for expert-led sessions designed to help you prioritise your creativity and maintain the momentum of the course into the future.

Friday will be a day to consolidate everything you've learnt, network with other writers, set goals for the coming months, quiz your tutors in a lively Q&A session – and gain valuable insights about the novel market from a specialist literary agent.

Our course counsellor will be available for a private chat by phone or on Zoom during the longer refreshment breaks (12:30-13:30 and 16:00-17:00). Contact Kay in our admin team if you want to book a slot (0191 204 8860 or [kay@mslexia.co.uk](mailto:kay@mslexia.co.uk)). For more information, contact [postbag@mslexia.co.uk](mailto:postbag@mslexia.co.uk).

## Course timetable

### MONDAY - THURSDAY

09:00 *MONDAY ONLY! Welcome starts earlier, at 09:00, followed by 'Meet your group'*

09:30 Welcome and writing warm-ups

10:00 Group tuition\*

11:30 Caffeine/snack break

12:00 Group tuition\*

13:00 Meal break

14:00 Group tuition\*

16:00 Caffeine/snack break

16:30 Whole school social time

17:00 Happy Hour talks and workshops

### FRIDAY

09:30 Group contacts

10:00 Goal setting

11:30 Caffeine/snack break

12:00 Meet the agent

13:00 Meal break

14:00 Panel Q&A with all tutors

\*Tutors will alternate tuition, writing exercises and feedback differently according to their individual approaches to their particular topic for the day.

## Course tutors



### Lesley Glaister

Lesley will lead a day of workshops about creating character. In her sessions Lesley will work with you towards creating deep, complex and compelling fictional characters. Together, you'll look at how successful writers have made us believe in, and care about, the characters in their stories. Lesley will lead you through a series of exercises, in which you'll experiment with how to develop the physical, mental and emotional aspects of your own characters, making them compelling and convincing to yourself, as well as to your reader.

Lesley Glaister has written 17 critically acclaimed novels, many short stories, two pamphlets of poetry, and drama for radio and stage. Her first novel *Honour Thy Father* won the Somerset Maugham Award and a Betty Trask Award; *Now You See Me* was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for fiction, and *Easy Peasy* was shortlisted for the *Guardian* Fiction Prize and Little Egypt won a Jerwood Fiction Uncovered prize. Her most recent novel is *A Particular Man*. She mentors novelists and is a Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of St Andrews.



### Claire Hynes

Claire's day of workshops will look at how to write dialogue and monologues that convey personality and emotion. How does a beautician speak differently from a butcher? What about a jazz trumpeter and a nun? And how can you tell, just by the phrasing they use, when someone is nervous or angry, being honest or hiding something? Claire will explain what to put in to your fictional conversations and what to leave out; how to layer in vocabulary, dialect and subtext; and lead you through writing exercises that will make your characters leap off the page.

Claire Hynes is an Associate Professor in creative writing at UEA, that renowned centre of creative writing excellence. She is an award-winning writer of fiction, creative nonfiction and theatre monologues, whose work has been widely published and performed, including by the BBC, Contact Theatre Manchester, Wasafiri and Lighthouse. She has been awarded a Civitella Ranieri Writing Fellowship for 2025-26. Prior to teaching at UEA, she worked as a BBC documentary filmmaker.



### Jane Rogers

Structure is the skeleton on which your novel depends for its momentum; structure organises the 'and then and then and then' into a narrative with pace and drive. In Jane's day of workshops you will analyse the structure of a range of published novels, and explore a number of techniques for testing how well your current structure is serving your novel. Through exercises, examples and discussion, Jane will help you identify the difference between structure and plot, and consider how pace and suspense can be intensified by using an effective structure.

Jane Rogers has published ten novels, a collection of stories, TV and radio drama. Her novels range from historical (*Mr Wroe's Virgins*, which she adapted into an award-winning BBC2 serial) through contemporary (*Island*, about a young woman who sets out to murder her mother) to science fiction (*The Testament of Jessie Lamb*, ManBooker longlisted, winner of the Arthur C Clarke Award). She is Professor Emerita of Writing at Sheffield Hallam, and has taught writing to a wide variety of students. Her latest collection of stories, *Fire-Ready*, is out now.



### Margaret Wilkinson

Margaret will lead a day of workshops on style and point of view. What is a writing style? Do you have one? Where is it? Your prose writing style is your unique fingerprint on the page: the rhythm and syntax you favour, how visual or speech-led your writing is, how descriptive or pared down, how intimate or distant, lyrical or transparent. Margaret will help you find, clarify, nurture, intensify or change your style. She'll guide you through a series of exercises and handouts you can use over and over again to access, adapt or sharpen your unique authorial voice.

Margaret Wilkinson is a prose, stage and radio writer. Her fiction has been widely published, her plays have toured the UK, and her radio plays have been broadcast on BBC Radio 4. She recently retired from her role as Senior Lecturer on the MA in Creative Writing at Newcastle University, where she taught fiction and script at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Margaret is a regular contributor to *Mslexia* and is author of our *Mslexia Minis* ebooks *Writing for Radio* and *Writing Short Stories*. Her novel *Lublin* won the Wingate Literary Prize and the RSL Encore Prize in 2025.

## Course tutors



### Amandeep Singh

Amandeep will be available on the final day to answer questions about the novel market, and how to prepare your manuscript for submission. She has worked as an editor, bookseller and literary agent, including at Penguin Random House. As a commissioning editor, she published only debut authors; as an agent she continues to champion new voices and works in-depth on concept and editorial development with her clients. She has judged the Little, Brown New Voices award and has read for WriteNow, the 4th Write Prize and HarperCollins' Author Academy.

Amandeep is currently an Associate Agent at Graham Maw Christie. She is building a select list of book-club and upmarket fiction, particularly character-led stories with lots of heart. She is also seeking select fantasy and speculative fiction. For non-fiction, she is looking for compelling memoirs about universal experiences, and books about current affairs, relationships, nature and the climate crisis. Her authors have won or been nominated for the Creative Future Award, Austrian Science Book Prize, Pushcart Prize and Attitude Pride Award.



### Bec Evans

Bec will lead Happy Hour sessions on overcoming obstacles to writing – such as procrastination, poor time management and lack of confidence – and on building resilience and a long-term writing practice. Bec will also be leading a goal-setting workshop on Friday that will help you develop a realistic plan to navigate your memoir-writing journey, including visualising success, dealing with setbacks, and setting up accountability structures. These practical sessions will give you the tools to keep you going long after the course.

Bec Evans is an author, coach and consultant dedicated to helping writers stay motivated. Starting her career as a bookseller, Bec moved into publishing, managed teams of writers, and was a centre director for Arvon. She supports writers, writing groups, universities and publishers through The Written Academy, and shares insight in her weekly newsletter *Breakthroughs and Blocks* on Substack. She is co-author of *Mslexia's Diary & Planner 2025* and her latest book is *Written: How to Keep Writing and Build a Habit That Lasts*.



### Rosie Garland

Rosie will be your MC and guide during the course. She will get your creative juices flowing each day with freewriting exercises, introduce our whole-group sessions, and lead workshops on the importance of self-care in a writer's life – and on ways of outwitting the internal critic that often sabotages our creativity and motivation. Rosie will also introduce our guest literary agent, lead the Q&A session with our craft tutors and networking with your fellow writers.

Rosie Garland writes long and short fiction and poetry, and sings with post-punk band The March Violets. Her writing is published internationally and her latest poetry collection *What Girls do the Dark* (Nine Arches Press) was shortlisted for the Polari Prize 2021. Her most recent novel *The Fates* is a feminist retelling of the Greek myth of the Fates. *The Times* has described her writing as 'a delight... with shades of Angela Carter'. Val McDermid has named her one of the most compelling LGBTQ+ writers in the UK today.



### Sue Spencer

Sue is a qualified coach and creative supervisor, with experience of working with a wide range of writers and artists in one-to-one consultations and group sessions. Her practice is also informed by four decades of employment in health care and higher education. Sue has helped steer many writers through the sometimes choppy emotional seas of the creative process and will be available for a private chat by phone or on Zoom during the longer refreshment breaks on the course.

Sue Spencer is also a published poet, editor and academic, with an MA in Poetry from Newcastle University. She has recently completed her term as an Associate Editor for *Medical Humanities*, and is a member of the writing for wellbeing organisation Lapidus International. Sue was our in-house counsellor during the Mslexicon writing weekend. She says, 'My aim is to offer restorative conversations that build strategies to help people continue to create in ways that matter to them'.